**Definition**  Adjective:   
A word that describes or modifies a noun or a pronoun (person, place, or thing). Adjectives frequently come before the noun or pronoun they modify (ex. a picturesque view, the cruel man, a little mouse) but can also come after. In cases where the adjective comes after the noun or pronoun, it often follows one of these verbs: “be,” “seem,” “appear,” “look,” “sound,” “smell,” “taste,” or “feel.”

Ex. He feels happy today. (“happy” is an adjective that modifies the pronoun “he”)  
 The orchestra sounds magnificent. (“magnificent” is an adjective that modifies the noun “orchestra”)  
 Selma is angry! (“angry” is an adjective that modifies the noun “Selma”)

**Grade Level Targeted/Rationale**   
The icebreaker activity and worksheet can be used or adapted for any grade level. Adjectives add richness, meaning and precision to our language. Every communicator can work on expanding his or her adjectival vocabulary and use of adjectives to enhance oral and written communication.

**Common Errors and Corrections**   
The most common errors made with adjectives involve confusion between adjectives and adverbs. Here are a few examples adapted from *The OWL at Purdue* (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/537/02/):

“Bad” (adjective) & “Badly” (adverb): It is incorrect to use “badly” when describing how someone feels. To write/say “I feel badly” implies that your capacity to feel is sub-standard. Instead, one must write/say “I feel bad.”

“Good” (adjective) & “Well” (adverb): People frequently say “I did good.” Here, “good” is used improperly to modify the verb “do.” “Good” cannot modify the verb, because it is an adjective, and adjectives do not modify verbs. The correct expression uses an adverb, as follows: “I did well.” Note, however, that “well” can also function as an adjective when it refers to health (ex. “Do you feel well today?”).

Other confusing pairs to watch out for: “sure” (adjective) & “surely” (adverb) / “real” (adjective) & “really” (adverb)

**Activity**Using adjectives as part of an icebreaker activity is a fun way for students to introduce themselves to you and each other while at the same time teaching and practicing this part of speech.

1. Explain the definition of an adjective and how adjectives are used.
2. Ask students think of or find an adjective that begins with the same letter as the first letter of their first name. Explain that the chosen adjective must also fittingly describe them (ex. Reticent Richard, Lucky Lola, Savvy Said). **DI:** Provide a list of adjectives, and allow students to use the list or come up with their own adjective.
3. Students introduce themselves (ex. “I’m pensive Paola.”), explaining why their chosen adjective describes them.
4. With the students, observe how the adjectives we picked added detail to our names. Instead of being just a name, the adjectives give us more information about the person to whom that name is attached.
5. Either use the icebreaker in isolation or follow it with the activity sheet.
6. Read the activity sheet’s introduction aloud, and have students complete “Exercise 1.”
7. Read the “Exercise 2” excerpt aloud, and have students complete “Exercise 2” individually, in pairs, or in groups.
8. Have students share some of their versions with the class before reading the actual version.

**Resources***The Purdue Online Writing Lab*. Purdue University. 2011. 26 Jan. 2012. Web. Buckley, Joanne. *Fit to Print: The Canadian Student’s Guide to Essay Writing*. 6th ed. Toronto: Nelson, 2004.

**Why do we use adjectives?** Adjectives add richness, meaning and precision to our language.

Observe how the following sentences are altered by the addition of an adjective:

1. Make an argument as to why cellular phones should or should not be allowed in school.
2. Make a convincing argument as to why cellular phones should or should not be allowed in school.
3. The women’s basketball team suffered a loss at last evening’s semi-final game.
4. The women’s basketball team suffered a crushing loss at last evening’s semi-final game.
5. The school will be closing for a period of time this spring.
6. The school will be closing for a short period of time this spring.

**Exercise 1:** Below each image, write an adjective that describes the shoe(s):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Exercise 2:** The following text is an excerpt from Rohinton Mistry’s short story “Swimming Lessons.” Fill in the blanks below with an adjective that you feel fits in the context:

The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ smell is in the hall again, I sniff happily and look forward to seeing the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ man in the lobby. I go downstairs and peer into the mailbox, see the blue and magenta of an Indian aerogramme with Don Mills, Ontario, Canada in Father’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hand through the slot.  
 I pocket the letter and enter the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lobby. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ man is there, but not in his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ place. He is not looking out through the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ door. His wheelchair is facing a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ wall where the wallpaper is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in places. As though he is not interested in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ world any more, having finished with all that, and now it’s time to see inside. What does he see inside, I wonder? I go up to him and say hullo. He says hullo without raising his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ chin. After a few seconds his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ countenance faces me. “How old do you think I am?” His eyes are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; he is looking even \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ inside than I first presumed.   
 “Well, let’s see, you’re probably close to sixty-four.”  
 “I’ll be seventy-eight \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ August.” But he does not chuckle or wheeze. Instead, he continues softly, “I wish my feet did not feel so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all the time. And my hands.” He lets his chin fall again. (243-244)